

Message Text

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INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 /011 R

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DRAFTED BY: S/S-O: JSEGARS

APPROVED BY: S/S-O: WNEWLIN

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R 041826Z APR 74

FM SECSTATE WASHDC

TO CINCPACAF

COMUSMACTHAI

COM13AF CLARK AFB

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S E C R E T STATE 068033

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ADDRESSEES HANDLE AS SPECAT EXCLUSIVE

FOLL REPEAT BANGIOK 5548 ACTION SECSTATE 04 APR 74 QUOTE

S E C R E T BANGKOK 5548

EXDIS

DEPARTMENT PLEASE PASS SECDEF, CINCPAC, MACTHAI, PACAF,
13AF, AND 13AF ADVON

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: MARR, TH

SUBJECT: USAF UNIT RELOCATIONS IN THAILAND

1. IN BANGKOK 4931 I OFFERED SOME SUGGESTIONS REGARDING
THE TIMING OF MOVEMENT OF VARIOUS MILITARY UNITS AS A
RESULT OF OUR RECENT DECISION TO REDUCE OUR PRESENCE IN
THAILAND. THESE WERE DESIGNED SOLELY TO GET ON THE RECORD
A VIEW ON ONE WAY TO TACKLE THE PROBLEM AND TO SOLICIT WASHINGTON'S

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THINKING IN ORDER THAT WE MIGHT, AS WE ARE COMMITTED TO DO,

CONSULT WITH THE THAI, PARTICULARLY ABOUT THOSE UNITS WHICH WILL BE MOVED IN THE NEAR FUTURE. IF WE DO NOT DO THIS BEFORE THE THAI LEARN OF OUR INTENTIONS BY OTHER MEANS, WE WILL LOSE PART OF THE POLITICAL GAIN WE ARE TRYING TO ACHIEVE AND ENDANGER OUR CONTINUED GOOD WORKING RELATIONSHIPS.

2. I AM CONCERNED THAT THIS IS EXACTLY WHAT IS ABOUT TO HAPPEN. ON APRIL 3, AS PART OF MY PROGRAM OF VISITS TO ALL U.S. ACTIVITIES IN THAILAND, I WENT TO TAKHLI AND KORAT. AT KORAT I COULD NOT HELP BUT NOTICE THAT REVETMENTS WERE BEING TORN DOWN TO MAKE ROOM FOR F-111'S FROM TAKHLI. THIS IS, OF COURSE, EQUALLY NOTICEABLE TO THE THAI, WHO ARE QUICK TO ACCUSE US OF DOING OUR THING IN THAILAND WITHOUT CONSULTING THEM.

3. IT IS OBVIOUS THAT THE U.S. MILITARY IN KORAT HAVE HAD SOME INSTRUCTIONS THROUGH MILITARY CHANNELS OR THEY WOULD NOT BE TAKING THE ACTIONS ALREADY UNDER WAY. IT IS ESSENTIAL THAT I BE CUT IN ON THIS TRAFFIC IN ORDER THAT WE CAN KEEP OUR PLANNING AND OUR ACTIONS REGARDING MILITARY WITHDRAWALS IN PHASE WITH MY POLITICAL DISCUSSIONS WITH TOP THAI AUTHORITIES. WITH CHANGES ALREADY BEING MADE IN REVETMENTS IN KORAT AND RUMORS RIFE ON THE OTHER BASES, IT IS MOST IMPORTANT THAT I BE ABLE TO DISCUSS OUR INTENTIONS WITH THE RTG IN A MANNER THAT CORRESPONDS WITH DOD PLANNING. MUCH IS AT STAKE AND IT WOULD BE MOST UNWISE TO TELEGRAPH OUR INITIAL REDUCTIONS THROUGH OVERT ACTIONS UNTIL OUR WORKING LEVEL CONSULTATIONS WITH THE RTG TAKES PLACE.

4. ALTHOUGH ORDINARILY I WOULD NOT COMMENT ON A MILITARY UNIT LOCATION PLAN, AT KORAT IT DID STRIKE ME THAT WE MIGHT BE SPENDING SUBSTANTIAL SUMS OF MONEY TO SQUEEZE IN AND PROVIDE REVETMENTS FOR A LARGE NUMBER OF AIRPLANES FOR WHAT WILL PROBABLY BE NO MORE THAN A YEAR OR TWO, AT A TIME WHEN U-TAPAO WILL BE RELATIVELY EMPTY.

I RECOGNIZE THERE MAY BE VALID REASONS FOR EXTRA LOADING AT KORAT TO WHICH I AM NOT PRIVY, BUT IN A PERIOD OF AUSTERITY IN BOTH OUR MAP AND AID PROGRAMS THE EXPENDITURE OF FUNDS FOR TEMPORARY REQUIREMENTS MIGHT BE SUBJECT TO
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CRITICISM.
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Message Attributes

Automatic Decaptioning: Z
Capture Date: 01 JAN 1994
Channel Indicators: n/a
Current Classification: UNCLASSIFIED
Concepts: TROOP DEPLOYMENT, TROOP REDUCTIONS, MILITARY PLANS
Control Number: n/a
Copy: SINGLE
Draft Date: 04 APR 1974
Decaption Date: 28 MAY 2004
Decaption Note: 25 YEAR REVIEW
Disposition Action: RELEASED
Disposition Approved on Date:
Disposition Authority: GolinoFR
Disposition Case Number: n/a
Disposition Comment: 25 YEAR REVIEW
Disposition Date: 28 MAY 2004
Disposition Event:
Disposition History: n/a
Disposition Reason:
Disposition Remarks:
Document Number: 1974STATE068033
Document Source: CORE
Document Unique ID: 00
Drafter: O: JSEGARS
Enclosure: n/a
Executive Order: GS
Errors: N/A
Film Number: D740076-0995
From: STATE
Handling Restrictions: n/a
Image Path:
ISecure: 1
Legacy Key: link1974/newtext/t19740465/aaaachpv.tel
Line Count: 110
Locator: TEXT ON-LINE, ON MICROFILM
Office: ORIGIN SS
Original Classification: SECRET
Original Handling Restrictions: EXDIS
Original Previous Classification: n/a
Original Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Page Count: 3
Previous Channel Indicators: n/a
Previous Classification: SECRET
Previous Handling Restrictions: EXDIS
Reference: n/a
Review Action: RELEASED, APPROVED
Review Authority: GolinoFR
Review Comment: n/a
Review Content Flags:
Review Date: 12 AUG 2002
Review Event:
Review Exemptions: n/a
Review History: RELEASED <12-Aug-2002 by boyleja>; APPROVED <13 FEB 2003 by GolinoFR>
Review Markings:

Declassified/Released
US Department of State
EO Systematic Review
30 JUN 2005

Review Media Identifier:
Review Referrals: n/a
Review Release Date: n/a
Review Release Event: n/a
Review Transfer Date:
Review Withdrawn Fields: n/a
Secure: OPEN
Status: NATIVE
Subject: USAF UNIT RELOCATIONS IN THAILAND
TAGS: MARR, TH, US
To: CINCPACAF MULTIPLE
Type: TE
Markings: Declassified/Released US Department of State EO Systematic Review 30 JUN 2005